

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

Town of Trumbull

CONNECTICUT

TOWN HALL
(203) 452-5048



5866 MAIN STREET
TRUMBULL, CT 06611

Water Pollution Control Authority May 29, 2007

In attendance:

George Biagioni, Chairman
Don Aiello
Paul Francese
Jack Goncalves
Janine Salvey
Fred Radford, Alternate

Also In Attendance:

Neil Lieberthal, Town Attorney
Joseph Solemene, Assistant W.P.C.A. Administrator

Chairman Biagioni called the public hearing to order at 7:32 p.m.

2007 ASSESSMENTS

Chairman Biagioni read the public hearing notice and introduced Joseph Solemene, Assistant W.P.C.A. Administrator and Jenny Francese, Clerk of the Commission as contacts in the W.P.C.A. office. Mr. Solemene invited anyone with comments or questions to approach the microphone and state their name and address for the record.

Albert Rankell – 11 Mistywood Lane

Question: If homeowner chooses the 18-year installment plan, is there a pre-payment penalty? Reply: The Tax Collector at the beginning of the fiscal year will take the annual payment and take off any amount of principal without a penalty. Question: If property is sold during the 18 year period, does the entire bill come due? Reply: No, the assessment is a lien on the property and is transferred to the new owner.

Jeff Jenkins – 9 Woodfield Drive

Question: Math error in calculation of front footage by \$118.45 per foot. Reply: Typographical error. Correct cost per foot is \$119.42. Total assessment is correct. The total is proposed and will probably be adjusted in the final assessment due to actual cost of curb-to-curb overlay, which has been estimated.

Richard Weiner – 5 Jamestown Road

Question: Lateral placed on neighbor's property in error. Septic system is failing and homeowner is waiting to hook up, but neighbor will not allow access. Reply: Connection may be made through the public right of way. Mr. Solemene assured the homeowner that it would be resolved.

Herb Gratrix, 30 Wareham Place

Question: When sewers are put in the street, how is my property connected? Reply: A lateral connecting pipe is placed onto your property approximately 10 feet in from the curb where it is capped. Question: Do I have any choice where you do that on my property? Reply: A letter will be sent asking where you would prefer your lateral to be located.

Dominic Tramontozzi, 20 Fox Road

Question: How many properties in the project? Reply: 337 Question: If subdivision occurs, how is it being treated? Reply: If there is a vacant parcel (approved building lot) we provide a lateral connection to that property. The assessment is deferred, but that front footage is part of the total front footage of the project. Upon the certificate of occupancy being awarded a full assessment is assigned to that property. If you have a building lot with an interior that can support five houses, the developer would pay the cost of putting that sewer system in. The cost of the sewer system is not financed through the Town, so we don't have a right to an assessment.

Fernanda Dasilva – 3 Doris Street

Question: Lives on corner of Doris and Gisella. Address is on Doris Street, sewer line runs approximately 35 feet in front of her house, yet she is being assessed for 135 feet of frontage on Gisella. Reply: Mrs. Dasilva's property is on a corner and she is being assessed for the shorter side. Lateral connection on property serves house adequately, there is no benefit to installing extra pipe. There are homeowners in town who may have 135 feet of frontage but pay for 150 feet because there are minimums and maximums. The formula has been established since the Sewer Commission was started in 1972.

Ken Saczawa – 155 Beechwood Avenue

Question: Bothered by the timing of the assessment, feels it should have been done six months ago. Reply: Public hearing was held in 2001 before the sewer expansion was designed. At that time cost of assessment was estimated to be around \$18,000. The office has communicated with the residents in relation to lateral location and we are always available for questions about the cost of the sewer system. The preliminary assessment is done because we wait until we have a good idea of what it's going to cost. We are required to have a public hearing. The assessment will take place on July 1, so there is adequate time if you have any questions to come and talk to us before the final assessment is out.

John Simek – 68 Fox Road

Question: Current two owners are deceased, property is going through probate. Won't clear probate until September or October. How will property be billed? Reply: Assessment runs with the land, interest will be applied September 1st.

Joao Ribeiro – 37 Tashua Lane

Question: How is assessment calculated? Homeowner has 1.02 acres with 192 front feet, part is in wetlands.

Reply: It is over one acre and is assessed at a maximum of 175 feet. Wetlands on property is not an issue. The clerk will verify the front footage and reply to the homeowner the next day.

Divyesh Pithadia – 7 Mistywood Lane

Question: Asked for an explanation of the assessment formula, his front footage is 70' and the minimum for his lot size is 125'. Reply: Mr. Solemene stated there are minimums and maximums that have been established since the inception of this commission. Some homeowners benefit from having more than the maximum, but some have to pay the minimum. The rationale has always been that the service that is being provided is the same whether you have 300 feet or 80 feet, and everyone's assessment is within a parameter. No one pays twice the assessment and no one pays half, because everyone's benefit is the same.

Dominic Tramontozzi, 20 Fox Road

Follow-up question: Tashua Knolls Golf Course backs up to Fox Road, were they assessed? Reply: A sewer main does not approach the golf course, there is no assessment.

There being no one else to speak,

- **Motion to close the first public hearing by (Commissioner SALVEY), second (Commissioner AIELLO). Motion carried unanimously.**

SEWER USER RATE INCREASE

Chairman Biagioni read the public hearing notice. Mr. Solemene explained that the W.P.C.A. received correspondence from the City of Bridgeport W.P.C.A. increasing the cost of sewage treatment by 10.7%. Also, after an internal audit by the Finance Director, the account used to cover extraordinary repairs was found to be under-funded, requiring the annual maintenance fee to be increased to make up for the shortfall.

Chairman Biagioni opened the floor to questions.

Tony D'Aquila – 20 Valley View Road

Mr. D'Aquila stated that he reviewed some of the data and is questioning whether or not the Commission is operating the sewer district efficiently and effectively, referring to the lateral connection being put on a neighbor's property. If this did occur, who pays the cost for moving the lateral? Chairman Biagioni replied that it hasn't been

determined yet if a mistake was made. Mr. Solemene added that of 337 lateral connections, this is the first time he has heard of this problem. There will be a resolution without any additional cost to the homeowner.

Mr. D'Aquila referred to the legal notice posted in Town Hall in which the increase is stated as 10.7%, but he calculated the increase to be 10.5%. Which is correct? Reply: The correct number is 10.5%.

Mr. D'Aquila referred to the Annual Maintenance fee. Last year the fee per unit was \$80.20, this year the Commission is proposing \$95.30, an increase of 18.8%. Mr. Solemene replied that the fund is used for emergency repairs, and he was advised to have a balance in the fund of over one million dollars.

Mr. D'Aquila encouraged the Commission to pursue a more competitive source of wastewater treatment. He feels Stratford and Fairfield would cost much less than Bridgeport and wonders why we haven't negotiated with either of these towns. Mr. Solemene replied that he has approached Fairfield and they are not interested. We are currently communicating with Stratford for the future North Nichols sewer project. Stratford is asking for \$3,500 per home unit charge. The current Trumbull unit charge is \$500 per home which has not changed since 1972. Mr. D'Aquila also suggested that the Town build its own sewage treatment plant at White Plains and Old Town Road. He stated that sometime in the early 1970's the federal government offered money to the Town to build it, but the politicians were not interested. Attorney Lieberthal replied that back in the 1970's the Town of Trumbull paid for the infrastructure that is used with Bridgeport. Even if it could be done, it would be very costly to the Town.

Mr. D'Aquila questioned the Commission on how the rates are paid. Rates are based on fall and winter consumption, with an average of both used for the spring and summer billing. The basis of the decision is that people fill pools and water gardens, etc., in the spring and summer. Mr. Solemene replied that we receive many calls from users who water their lawns, wash their cars and fill their pools in the summer, and they all ask the same thing; "How am I being compensated for the water that doesn't go into the sewer?" For one person who is unhappy with the billing plan, there are hundreds who are.

There being no one else to speak,

- **Motion to close the second public hearing (Commissioner SALVEY) second (Commissioner GONCALVES). Motion carried unanimously.**
- **Motion to accept the proposed 2007 sewer assessments (Commissioner SALVEY) second (Commissioner FRANCESE). No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.**
- **Motion to approve the Sewer User Rate Increase as proposed (Commissioner AIELLO) second (Commissioner SALVEY). No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.**

There being no other business before the Authority,

- **Motion to adjourn the Public Hearing (Commissioner GONCALVES) second (Commissioner SALVEY). Motion carried unanimously.**

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Francese
Clerk of the Commission